

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A stabilizer bar assembly for an automotive vehicle comprising:

a stabilizer bar;

a bushing mounted to said stabilizer bar;

a support ring mounted onto said stabilizer bar adjacent said bushing and adapted to provide a stop to prevent said bushing from moving axially along said stabilizer bar;

said support ring having a plurality of inwardly extending projections, each of said inwardly extending projections having a distal end in contact with an outer surface of said stabilizer bar, said distal ends of said inwardly extending projections being welded to said outer surface of said stabilizer bar to secure said support ring onto said stabilizer bar.

2. (original) The stabilizer bar assembly of claim 1 wherein said support ring is a single piece, said inwardly extending projections being spaced about said support ring such that the distal ends of said inwardly extending projections contact said outer surface of said stabilizer bar at spaced apart locations about said stabilizer bar.

3. (original) The stabilizer bar assembly of claim 1 wherein said support ring comprises a plurality of portions, each of said portions having a plurality of inwardly extending projections having distal ends that are welded onto said outer surface of said stabilizer bar, said portions being spaced about said stabilizer bar.

4. (original) The stabilizer bar assembly of claim 3 wherein said portions of said support ring are mounted to said stabilizer bar such that each of said portions is aligned with one another and said bushing.

5. (original) The stabilizer bar assembly of claim 1 further including a bushing retainer mounted about said bushing.

6. (original) The stabilizer bar assembly of claim 5 further including a mounting bracket fixedly connected to said bushing retainer, said mounting bracket being adapted to connect to a structural component of an automobile.

7. (currently amended) A method of mounting a ~~bushing~~ support ring onto a stabilizer bar including:

- providing a stabilizer bar;
- providing a support ring having a plurality of inwardly extending projections, each of the inwardly extending projections having a distal end;
- placing the support ring onto the stabilizer bar such that the inwardly extending projections are in contact with an outer surface of the stabilizer bar;
- exerting a radial force against the support ring to force the distal ends of the inwardly extending projections against the outer surface of the stabilizer bar; and
- passing an electric current through the stabilizer bar and the support ring such that the distal ends of the inwardly extending projections are welded onto the outer surface of the stabilizer bar.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the support ring is a single piece having an opening at one side, wherein placing the support ring onto the stabilizer bar such that the inwardly extending projections are in contact with an outer surface of the stabilizer bar includes bending the support ring to an open position where the opening is large enough to accommodate the stabilizer bar, placing the support ring about the stabilizer bar, and bending the support ring to bring the distal ends of the inwardly extending projections into contact with the outer surface of the stabilizer bar.

9. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the support ring comprises a

plurality of portions, each of the portions having a plurality of inwardly extending projections having distal ends, wherein placing the support ring onto the stabilizer bar such that the inwardly extending projections are in contact with an outer surface of the stabilizer bar includes placing each of the portions onto the stabilizer bar, spaced circumferentially about the stabilizer bar, such that the distal ends of the inwardly extending projections are in contact with the outer surface of the stabilizer bar.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9 wherein placing each of the portions onto the stabilizer bar, spaced circumferentially about the stabilizer bar includes placing each of the portions onto the stabilizer bar such that each of the portions is aligned with one another to provide support for the bushing around the stabilizer bar.